

Message Text

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PAGE 01 TUNIS 05869 01 OF 02 201357Z

44

ACTION NEA-16

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-11 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03 SS-20

USIA-15 AID-20 EB-11 IGA-02 OMB-01 HEW-08 TRSE-00

AGR-20 COME-00 CIEP-03 OS-03 CU-05 DRC-01 AF-10 /176 W
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R 201235Z SEP 74

FM AMEMBASSY TUNIS

TO SECSTATE WSHDC 6919

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE SECTION 1 OF 2 TUNIS 5869

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EAID, TBIO, TS

SUBJECT: PRESIDENT BOURGUIBA'S INTEREST IN AMERICAN-
TYPE HOSPITAL IN TUNISIA

REF: (A) STATE 197356, (B) TUNIS 5059, (C) TUNIS 5854,
OCT 8, 1973 (PARA 7)

1. SUMMARY: THIS IS A JOINT EMBASSY/USAID RESPONSE.
EMBASSY, IN CLOSE CONSULTATION WITH USAID, HAS ALREADY
ENGAGED IN CONSIDERABLE ACTIVITY IN RESPONSE TO PRESIDENT
BOURGUIBA'S REQUEST OF LAST YEAR (SEE REF C) FOR USG
ASSISTANCE IN CREATION OF AMERICAN-TYPE HOSPITAL IN
TUNISIA. THIS HAS INCLUDED SUBMISSION TO GOT OF EMBASSY-AID-
VOLAG COMMITTEE REPORT AND AMBASSADOR'S OFFER TO PRESIDENT
BOURGUIBA TO FACILITATE TEAM OF PRIVATE RPT PRIVATE AMERICAN
EXPERTS TO HELP DRAW UP LANS. WE HAVE CONSISTENTLY
DISCOURAGED GOT FROM EXPECTING ANY AID ASSISTANCE AND HAVE
SOUGHT STEER GOT IN DIRECTION OF PRIVATE AMERICAN ASSISTANCE
PLUS POSSIBLY SOME USG TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE (E.G. PEACE
CORPS), ASSUMING GOT CAN PROVIDE BASIC FUNDING.
EMBASSY/USAID BELIEVES PROPOSED VISIT OF TWO AID
HEALTH EXPERTS IN ATTEMPT DIVERT GOT INTEREST FROM
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PAGE 02 TUNIS 05869 01 OF 02 201357Z

CONSTRUCTION OF MODERN HOSPITAL TO CARE FOR RURAL POOR

WOULD BE COUNTERPRODUCTIVE AT THIS TIME. INSTEAD, WE RECOMMEND: (A) DEPT/AID/W SHOULD APPROACH PROJECT HOPE WITH VIEW DISPATCH TEAM OF PRIVATE AMERICANS TO ADVISE TUNISIANS ON HOSPITAL PROJECT; (B) IF PROJECT HOPE AGREES, DEPT/AID/W SHOULD INFORM AMBASSADOR HEDDA THAT SINCE PROPOSED FRAME OF REFERENCE FOR AID HEALTH TEAM IS NOT DIRECTLY RESPONSIVE TO PRESIDENT BOURGUIBA'S WISHES, WE PROPOSE INSTEAD FOR GOT CONSIDERATION DESPATCH OF PROJECT HOPE TEAM DIRECTLY LINKED TO HOSPITAL PROJECT. END SUMMARY.

2. EMBASSY WISHES REEMPHASIZE EXTENT AND NATURE OF ITS EFFORTS OVER PAST YEAR TO BE RESPONSIVE TO PRESIDENT BOURGUIBA'S REQUEST FOR USG ASSISTANCE IN CREATION OF AMERICAN-TYPE HOSPITAL IN TUNISIA. IN VIEW OF FOREGOING, IT IMPORTANT THAT WE BRIEFLY RECAPITULATE WHAT WE HAVE DONE.

3. BASICALLY, OUR THRUST HAS BEEN TO RULE OUT POSSIBILITY OF AID ASSISTANCE BUT TO NOTE POSSIBILITIES OF HELP FROM AMERICAN PRIVATE SECTOR PLUS POTENTIAL TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE THROUGH SUCH USG INSTITUTIONS AS PEACE CORPS AND POSSIBLE HEW. WE HAVE TOLD GOT THAT IT WOULD HAVE TO COME UP WITH THE FUNDS, BUT FOLLOWING WHAT SEEMED LIKE MILDLY FORTHCOMING RECEPTION ACCORDED AMBASSADOR HEDDA AT AID/W IN MAY, WE HAD NOT RPT NOT TOTALLY EXCLUDED POSSIBILITY OF TOKEN USG CONTRIBUTION IN OUR TALKS WITH TUNISIAN OFFICIALS. WE WERE THINKING OF POSSIBILITY OF SMALL CONTRIBUTION FROM AID'S OFFICE OF AMERICAN SCHOOLS AND HOSPITALS ABROAD (SER/ASHA)).

4. CHRONOLOGICAL HIGHLIGHTS OF OUR EFFORTS WERE AS FOLLOWS: (A) IN OCTOBER 1973 PRESIDENT BOURGUIBA FIRST RAISED SUBJECT WITH AMBASSADOR, WHO AT OUTSET DISCOURAGED HOPE FOR AID FUNDING, DESCRIBED EXISTING US PUBLIC AND PRIVATE ASSISTANCE IN TUNISIAN HEALTH SECTOR AND SAID, NONETHELESS, WE WOULD EXAMINE MATTER FURTHER (REF C); (B) IN EARLY 1974 AMBASSADOR FORMED COMMITTEE COMPOSED OF REPS FROM AID, VOLAGS AND EMBASSY WHICH EXAMINED WAYS IN WHICH GOT COULD PROCEED WITH PROJECT THROUGH OWN MEANS IN COOPERATION WITH UTLRIVATE INSTITUTIONS AND COMMERCIAL FIRMS; (C) IN EARLY MAY, WITHOUT MAKING JUDGMENT LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PAGE 03 TUNIS 05869 01 OF 02 201357Z

AS TO WHETHER HOSPITAL PROJECT MEETS TUNISIA'S PRIORITY DEVELOPMENT NEEDS, COMMITTEE REPORT (COPY HELD BY NEA/AFN) COMPLETED AND SUBMITTED BY AMBASSADOR TO MINISTER OF HEALTH UNDER COVER OF LETTER FROM AMBASSADOR (REPORT INTER ALIA EMPHASIZED ABSENCE USG FUNDING, STRESSED HIGH COST OF OPERATION, NOTED POSSIBILITY OF MARGINAL US PUBLIC AND PRIVATE TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AND COMPARED RELATIVE ADVANTAGES OF CONSTRUCTING HOSPITAL VERSUS CLINIC); (D) IN AUGUST

AMBASSADOR INFORMED PRESIDENT BOURGUIBA OF WHAT HAD BEEN DONE (TUNIS 5059) AND OFFERED TO FACILITATE VISIT BY TEAM OF PRIVATE RPT PRIVATE EXPERTS TO HELP DRAW UP PLANS IF GOT PREPARED TO PUT UP MONEY FOR HOSPITAL.

5. TAKING SOMEWHAT DIFFERENT TACK, AID/W PROPOSES DISPATCH TWO PUBLIC HEALTH EXPERTS "TO EXPLORE HEALTH REQUIREMENTS WITH GOT OFFICIALS IN ATTEMPT ARRIVE ALTERNATIVE WAYS USE RESOURCES" (STATE 197356). AS DESIRABLE AS IT MAY BE TO CHANNEL BOURGUIBA REQUEST AWAY FROM EXPENSIVE, SOPHISTICATED FACILITY BACK TOWARD MEETING HEALTH NEEDS OF TUNISIAN PEOPLE, FACT OF MATTER IS PRESIDENT BOURGUIBA HAS FIRMLY MADE UP HIS MIND HE WANTS A MODERN AMERICAN-TYPE HOSPITAL. TEAM OF HEALTH EXPERTS JUST IS NOT RPT NOT GOING TO SUCCEED IN CHANGING HIS MIND -- ALTHOUGH WE APPRECIATE AID/W'S EFFORT TO TRY TO BE SOMEWHAT RESPONSIVE. INDEED, SHOULD TEAM ARRIVE IN TUNISIA I AAUT THEIR PROPOSED ROLE BEING CLEARBY UNDERSTOOD BY TUNISIANS BEFOREHAND, TEAM COULD WELL BECOME A SERIOUS IRRITANT, SINCE TUNISIANS COULD LOGICALLY ASSUME THAT TEAM'S ARRIVAL FOLLOWING AMBASSADOR HEDDA'S TWO DEMARCHES, IMPLIES USG COMMITMENT TO HELP WITH HOSPITAL PROJECT. WE HAVE IMPRESSION THAT HEDDA IN MAY LED TUNISIAN OFFICIALS TO BELIEVE AID FINANCING OF HOSPITAL IS POSSIBLE IF REQUEST CHanneled THROUGH HIM IN WASHINGTON; WE THINK HE WILL BE RELUCTANT TO STRESS TO GOT THAT PROPOSED TWO EXPERTS CANNOT BE USED AS CHANNEL FIR AID TO HOSPITAL. (BASIC QUESTION OF US HEALTH ASSISTANCE TO RURAL POOR CAN BE ADDRESSED IN DAP EXERCISE.)

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PAGE 01 TUNIS 05869 02 OF 02 201417Z

44

ACTION NEA-16

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-11 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03 SS-20

USIA-15 AID-20 EB-11 IGA-02 OMB-01 HEW-08 TRSE-00

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R 201225Z SEP 74
FM AMEMBASSY TUNIS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6920

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE SECTION 2 OF 2 TUNIS 5869

6. FOR ABOVE REASONS, WE RECOMMEND AGAINST SENDING AT THIS TIME TWO PUBLIC HEALTH EXPERTS UNDER AID TO STUDY HEALTH REQUIREMENTS. INSTEAD, EMBASSY/USAID RECOMMEND THAT DEPT AND AID/W EXPLORE POSSIBILITY OF HAVING TEAM FROM PROJECT HOPE VISIT TUNISIA IN ORDER TO MAKE FURTHER STUDY OF HOSPITAL PROJECT AND ITS POTENTIAL CONTRIBUTION TO TUNISIAN PUBLIC HEALTH NEEDS. PROJECT HOPE PRESIDENT DR. WALSH TOLD EMBASSY DURING RECENT VISIT TO TUNISIA THAT HOPE COULD PROBABLY RESPOND TO SUCH A TUNISIAN REQUEST. (POSSIBILITY WAS NOTED IN AMBASSADOR'S DISCUSSION WITH PRESIDENT BOURGUIBA IN AUGUST.) IF PROJECT HOPE AGREES TO SENDING TEAM, WE WOULD PROPOSE THIS TO AMBASSADOR HEDDA AS ALTERNATIVE TO AID HEALTH TEAM, NOTING THAT SINCE AID TEAM WOULD HAVE TO LIMIT ITSELF TO PUBLIC HEALTH FIELD AND PRESIDENT BOURGUIBA HAS HIS MIND SET ON A HOSPITAL, WE NOW BELIEVE THAT BETTER APPROACH WOULD BE HOPE TEAM TIED DIRECTLY TO HOSPITAL PROJECT.

7. OUR PROPOSAL HAS FOLLOWING ADVANTAGS: (A) IT GETS USG OUT OF DIRECT INVOLVEMENT IN WHAT COULD BE COSTLY UNDERTAKING AND IN WHICH GOT WOULD BE DISAPPOINTED IF, AFTER SEEMINGLY FORTHCOMING GESTURES, USG ASSISTANCE WERE NONEXISTENT OR LIMITED; (B) IT APPEARS RESPONSIVE TO LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PAGE 02 TUNIS 05869 02 OF 02 201417Z

PRESIDENT BOURGUIBA'S SPECIFIC REQUEST AND AVOIDS APPEARANCE OF TRYING TO DIVERT ATTENTION TO PUBLIC HEALTH FIELD (FOR WHICH BOURGUIBA PERSONALLY HAS NOT REQUESTED AID); (C) IT BRINGS IN VOLUNTARY AGENCY FROM VERY BEGINNING IN UNDERTAKING WHERE VOLAGS COULD HELP PROVIDE STAFF AS RECOGNIZED BY HEDDA IN PARA 2, STATE 112224, ASSUMING, OF COURSE, GOT PREPARED BEAR MAJOR COSTS OF CONSTRUCTING AND OPERATING HOSPITAL; (D) IT PERMITS ZIMPARTIAL OUTSIDE AGENCY TO DETERMINE REAL ECONOMIC AND TECHNICAL FEASIBILITY OF PROPOSED HOSPITAL TO SUPPORT GROWING TOURIST INDUSTRY AS WELL AS NEEDS OF INCREASING PROSPEROUS TUNISIAN MIDDLE CLASS, GETTING USG OUT OF DIFFICULT POSITION OF TELLING PRESIDENT BOURGUIBA WHAT HIS COUNTRY NEEDS AND DOES NOT NEED. (E) IT OPENS UP POTENTIAL OF PROMISING MARKET FOR EXPORT OF US GOODS AND SERVICES IN MEDICAL AREA IN EVENT TUNISIA IS ABLE FINANCE HOSPITAL PROJECT FROM ITS OWN GROWING FINANCIAL RESOURCES OR POSSIBLE CONCESSIONAL

AID FROM OIL-PRODUCING ARAB STATES.

8. POST WOULD APPRECIATE COPY OF REPORT WHICH HEDDA
EVIDENTLY SUBMITTED TO SUPPORT HIS DEMARCHE YE HOSPITAL.
SEELYE

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Message Attributes

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